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Timeless Sources

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PICTURAE
ETRUSCORUM
IN VASCULIS
HISCE PRIMUM IN UNICA COLLECTAE.

INDICATIONIBUS, ET DISERTATIONIBUS DOCT. FRIDERICI
JOH. BAPTISTAE PASSERII NOB. PISACI

Regiae Bibliothecae Praefecti, et Historiae et Geographiae
Instituto, Censoris, Professoris, et Academiæ in Urbem

SOCIO
VOL. SECUNDUM
TABULAS C. CONTINENS

1788. PISACI.



ROMAE MDCCCLXX
EX TYPOGRAPHIO JOHANNIS ZEMPEL.

Sculpit. Venerabilis M. J. Zempel.

1788.

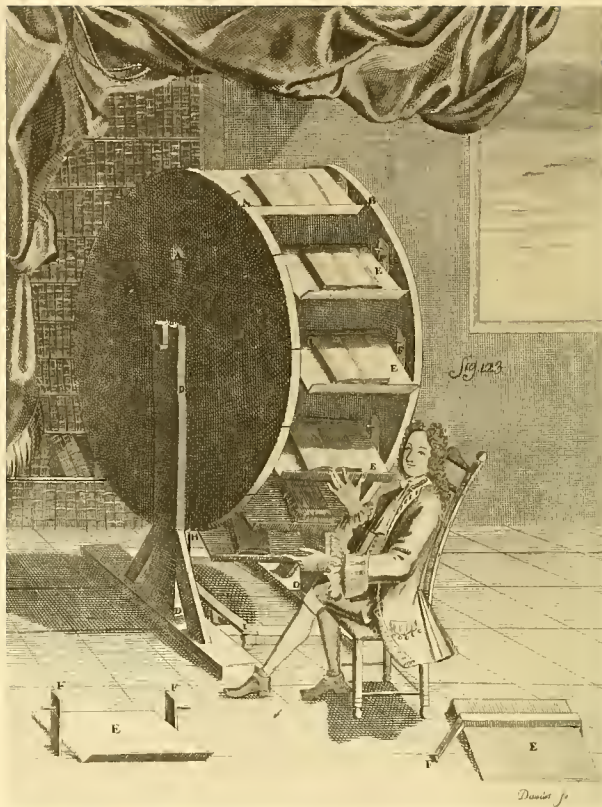
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Foreword



- 1 Nicolas Grollier de Serviere
Recueil d'Ouvrages Curieux de Mathématique et de Mécanique;
ou, Description du Cabinet de Monsieur Grollier de Serviere
Paris: Jombert, 1751

*Made possible through
the kindness of Arthur Ross.*

Cover: Giovanni Battista Passeri,
Picturae Etruscorum in Vasculis, vol. 2
Rome: Johannis Zempel, 1767-1775

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When the Museum was first opened to designers, students, and the public at Cooper Union in 1897, books were shown side by side with the objects they related to, and all were freely available to the hands and eyes of the visitor. In time, of course, that practice was changed as the number of books reached proportions requiring the discipline of a library. But books have ever been considered the vital glue of the collection, since they provide inspiration and make relationships and comments on a variety of objects of different categories, and since, insofar as they successfully express the various arts incorporated in their production – from typeface to binding – they become themselves objects for consideration in a museum collection.

Acquired with a single-minded purpose, the Museum's books, archives, and book-related materials have been chosen for their comment on design and the decorative arts.

From the splendid books on natural history, architecture, ornament, interior and landscape design, decorative arts, textiles, theater, costume, and festivals to auction, trade, and exhibition catalogues, the Museum offers in its Library and collections a remarkably concentrated research resource covering the enormously broad field of the useful arts. Now a part of the Smithsonian Institution Libraries system, the Cooper-Hewitt branch continues to be used heavily by architectural historians and preservationists; scholars of the decorative arts; designers of textiles, costumes, and stage sets; interior designers; *anti-quaires*; publishers; collectors; and students from many universities, including those in the Museum's own master's degree program.

It is a particular delight to have an opportunity here to share the Museum's treasures from the Library, as an accompaniment to the exhibition *Timeless Sources: Rare Books of Design*. We are profoundly grateful to Arthur Ross, Council member and friend of the Museum, for enabling us to produce this publication. We are delighted also to honor hereby the memory of Henry Dreyfuss, one of the fathers of industrial design, and his wife, Doris, who were generous contributors to the Library and after whom it has been named.

Lisa Taylor
Director

Illustrated books have been an important part of the design process since the sixteenth century, when they were first used as vehicles for the dissemination of design patterns. Since then, designers, craftsmen, decorators, architects, and manufacturers have used books as tools – to advertise their expertise, record their designs, teach their students, catalogue their work, and learn about the latest changes in taste and the development of new techniques. Bound books of illustrations have a number of advantages over loose prints and drawings: they are easier to transport and store and, while both prints and books can be distributed to a wide audience, books allow the author and publisher to control the sequence of verbal and visual information.

Design books vary widely in format, price, and edition. Some of the largest books, and the most expensive, were published by successful designers. Eighteenth-century architects such as Robert Adam and William Chambers seized on the book as a means to advertise their work to an international audience of wealthy patrons and artists. Their books were lavishly illustrated and limited in edition, functioning in part as status symbols to indicate the subscribers' wealth and good taste.

Less expensive pattern books and technical manuals were published for artisans, journeymen, and apprentices. Pattern books usually contained little or no text, since their chief function was to supply craftsmen with a variety of forms or decoration that could be copied exactly or adapted. Technical manuals, on the other hand, contain detailed instructions on such topics as how to build a staircase or how to mix varnish or dyes.

Publishers also found an audience in amateurs who wanted ideas for improving their handwork. Illustrated magazines featuring instructions for needlework, domestic decoration, and gardening, in addition to colored illustrations of the latest fashions,

became particularly popular in the nineteenth century.

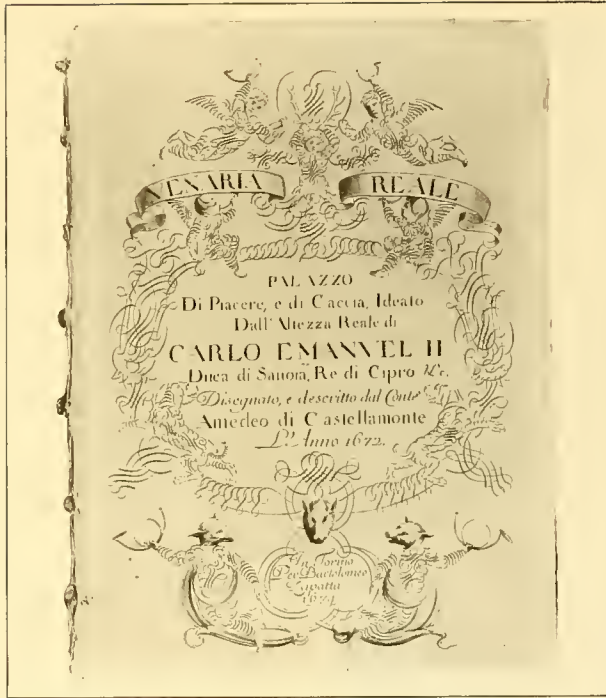
For several centuries manufacturers have used trade catalogues to advertise their wares. Ranging in size from leaflet to book, these publications are increasingly relied upon by decorators and designers for their up-to-date information on the appearance, color, size, price, and availability of numerous products.

The historian of design sometimes must rely on an illustrated book as the only remaining record of a work of art. Private collections are sold and thus dispersed, gardens can be lost through neglect, and buildings altered, destroyed or allowed to deteriorate. International trade fairs and exhibitions are temporary constructions, and festivals, holiday events, processions, and celebrations, with their fireworks, pageantry, and performances, happen only once. Fortunately, many such events were recorded and thus commemorated by producing an illustrated book.

Beginning in 1660 the architect Amedeo di Castellamonte designed and built the hunting palace Venaria Reale for Charles Emanuel II, Duke of Savoy (1634-1675). It was considered Castellamonte's most significant achievement, and he published a book about it in 1672. While little remains of the palace, which was destroyed by French troops in 1693, the book has lasted and continues to influence our assessment of Castellamonte's achievements and the taste of his time. The volume about the palace and its gardens features fold-out engravings (figure 2), two exquisitely decorated title pages (figure 3), and an imaginary dialogue between Castellamonte and the architect Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini.



2 Amedeo di Castellamonte. *Venaria Reale*. Torino: B. Zapatta, 1674.



3 Amedeo di Castellamonte. *Venaria Reale*. Torino: B. Zappata, 1674.



Fontaine de Neptune et de Thetis Fontaine des Neptun und der Thetis

4 *Résidences Mémoires de l'Incomparable Héros de Notre Siècle...Le Prince Eugene François*. Augsbourg: Jeremie Wolff, 1731.

Even more extraordinary is the volume *Résidences Mémoires de l'Incomparable Héros de Notre Siècle* (figure 4), illustrating the Belvedere, belonging to Prince Eugene of Savoy (1665-1736), who was considered to be one of the great military strategists of his time. In 1704 Prince Eugene, together with the Duke of Marlborough, defeated the troops of Louis XIV at the Battle of Blenheim, thus securing Bavaria for the Hapsburg emperor and saving Vienna from the French. To commemorate their victory the Duke of Marlborough was awarded with Blenheim Palace and Prince Eugene with the Belvedere in Vienna. The Belvedere, which was designed by Johann Lucas von Hildebrandt between 1704 and 1725, is famous as the architect's largest and most ornate garden palace. Hildebrandt's interior decorations incorporated numerous military symbols to celebrate the prince's achievements in battle. The palace provided an opulent setting for grand entertainments and served as the prince's summer residence and a place for him to display his art collection. Although parts of the palace and garden have been altered over time, the book of engravings, published in 1731, continues to provide visual testimony of the prince's taste, power, and wealth.

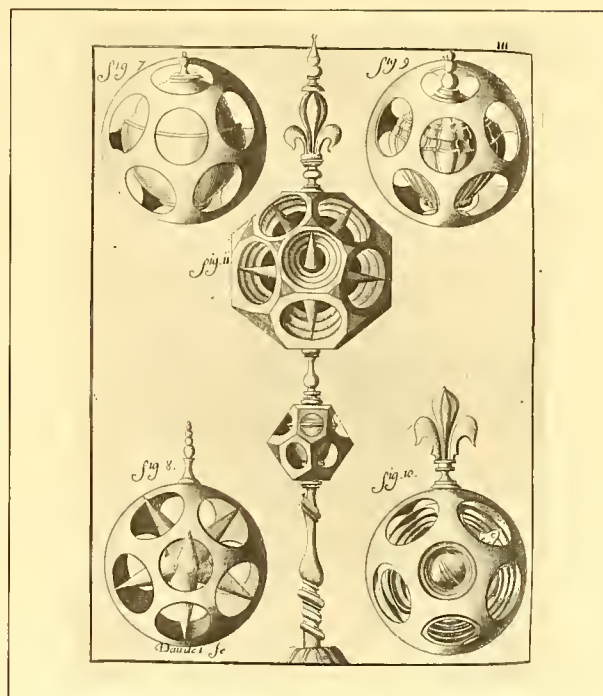
Published catalogues of private collections are particularly valuable records of the history of taste. Beginning in the Renaissance and continuing on into the seventeenth century, cultivated European gentlemen compiled collections of natural and man-made objects that they displayed in a room specially designed for the purpose, a cabinet of curiosities. In the cabinet of Nicolas Grollier de Serviere (1596-1689) (figure 1) were various small mechanical devices, especially clocks. Grollier de Serviere also made and collected examples of virtuoso carvings in ivory, using an ornamental lathe of a kind invented in Dresden in the early seventeenth century. The globes were made from a single ball of ivory that was pierced in over a dozen openings (figure 6). The great com-



5 Albertus Seba. *Locupletissimi Rerum Naturalium Thesauri Accurata Descriptio*. Amsterdam: Janssonio Waesbergios, 1734-1765.

plexity of form indicates Grollier's level of skill. Making such ornamental objects was described by the author, the grandson of Nicolas Grollier de Serviere, as "noble and agreeable amusement."

A cabinet of curiosities contained both man-made decorative objects and natural history specimens because the two were considered to be equally beautiful and precious. Frequently collectors displayed specimens arranged in a drawer in an ornamental pattern, and such rarities as nautilus shells were decorated with carving, precious metals, and jewels. Examples of such embellishments can be seen in the collection of Albertus Seba (1665-1736), a Dutch



6 Nicolas Grollier de Serviere. *Recueil d'Ouvrages Curieux de Mathématique et de Mécanique; ou, Description du Cabinet de Monsieur Grollier de Serviere*. Paris: Jombert, 1751.

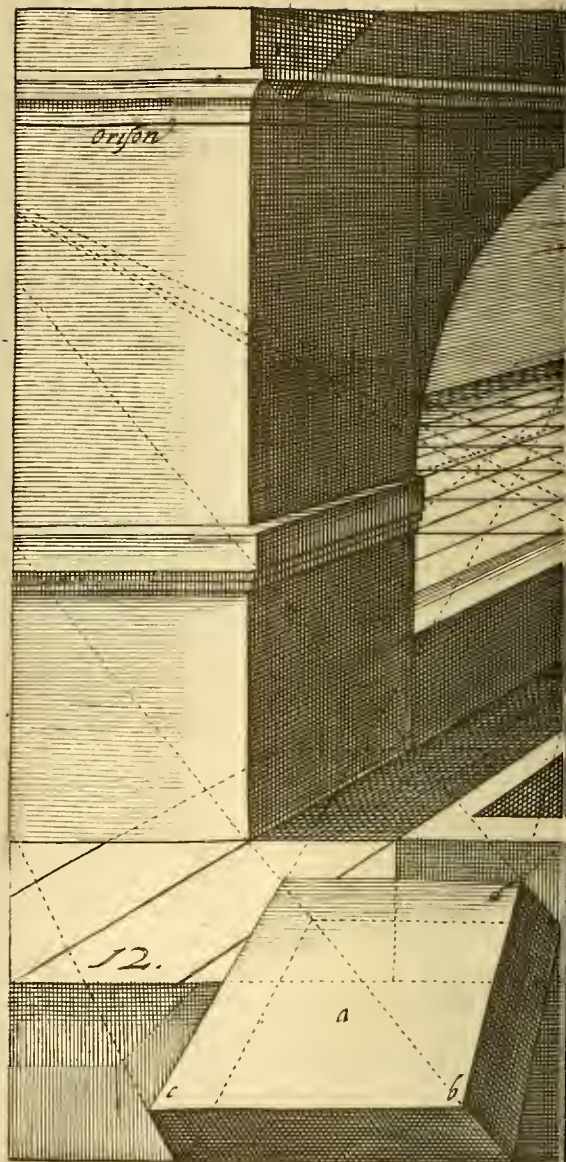
apothecary and amateur naturalist. Seba was famous for the collection of natural history specimens that he sold to Peter the Great of Russia in 1717. He subsequently made an even larger collection, considered in his time as the finest in Europe, and described it in four folio volumes entitled *Locupletissimi Rerum Naturalium Thesauri*, which he published between 1734 and 1765. In a magnificent frontispiece Seba is shown surrounded by a display of specimens (figure 5).

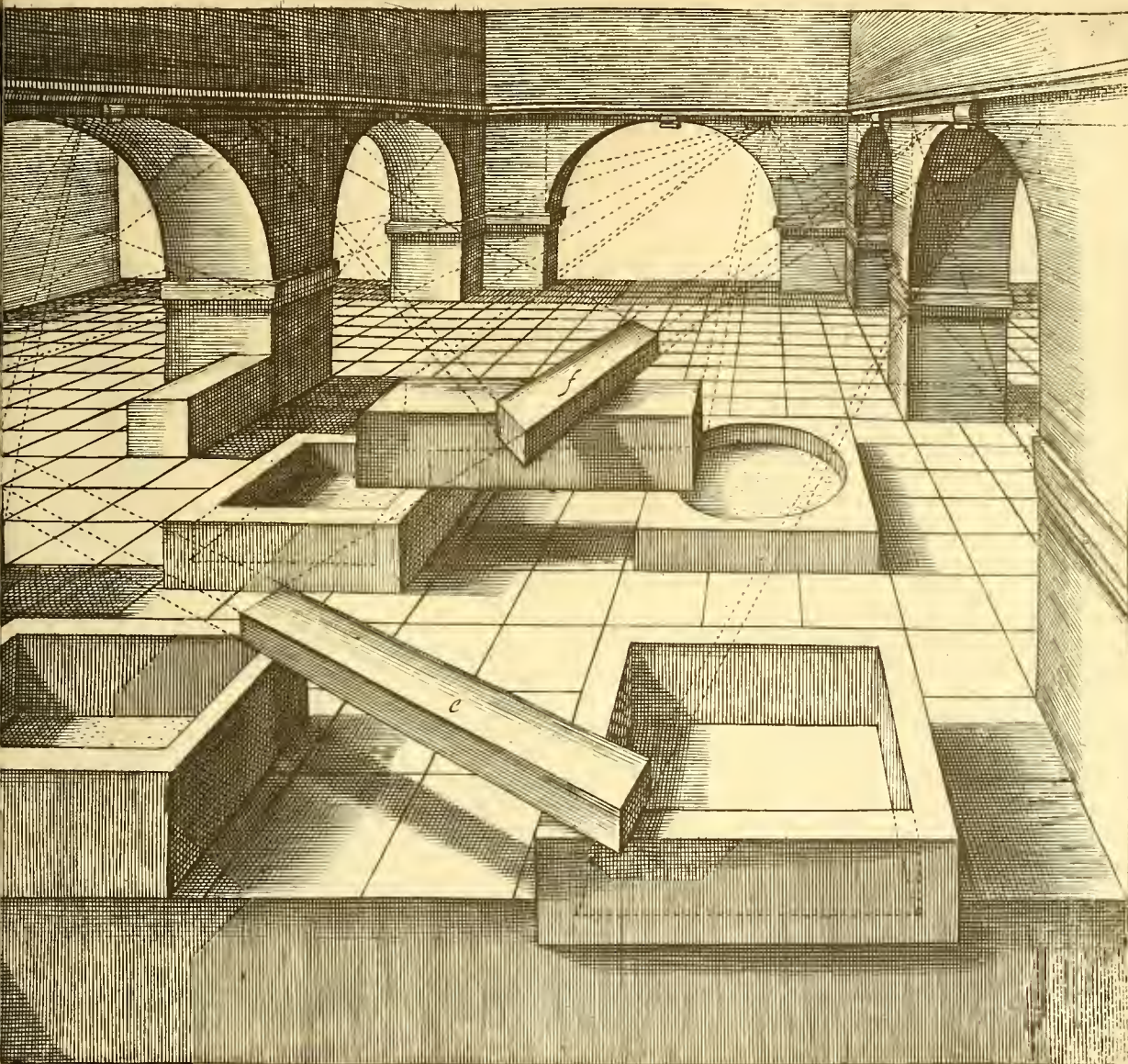
Beginning in the Renaissance, numerous published works appeared that included illustrations of the principles of perspective. One of these, Jan Vredeman de Vries's *Perspective* (Leiden, 1604), was

intended for “all Painters, Engravers, Sculptors, Metalworkers, Architects, Designers, Masons, Cabinetmakers, Carpenters and all lovers of the arts” who had to understand the theory of perspective in order to make sketches of works in the process of design. In seventy-three engravings Vredeman illustrates how to establish the vanishing point into which all lines in an image converge (figure 7).

While much technical information for designers, architects, and artists was becoming readily available in published form, most skills related to the crafts and design remained closely guarded secrets, taught by master craftsmen only to their workshop apprentices. It is in this environment that the *Encyclopédie* of Denis Diderot must be viewed. Between 1751 and 1772 Diderot compiled and edited seventeen volumes of text and eleven volumes of plates for his *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts, et des Métiers*. His goal was to publicize mechanical trade secrets in the hope that “our descendants, by becoming better instructed may as a consequence be more virtuous and happy.” Not only did he have to pry secrets from suspicious craftsmen; he also faced the constant threat of censorship and even possible imprisonment. The articles about politics and religion in the first volumes of the *Encyclopédie* were initially read as challenges to the hierarchical power of the church and state. Much to Diderot’s disgust, his associate in the publication, Jean d’Alembert, took it upon himself to remove potentially offending sections before they were sent to the typesetter. The scandals that arose from time to time throughout the publication’s development ultimately enhanced its sales. So popular was the publication that when Quentin de la Tour drew Madame de Pompadour’s portrait in 1756 she was depicted seated before a table upon which a volume of the *Encyclopédie* rests.

The large engravings in the *Encyclopédie* are immediately recognizable for the wealth of informa-





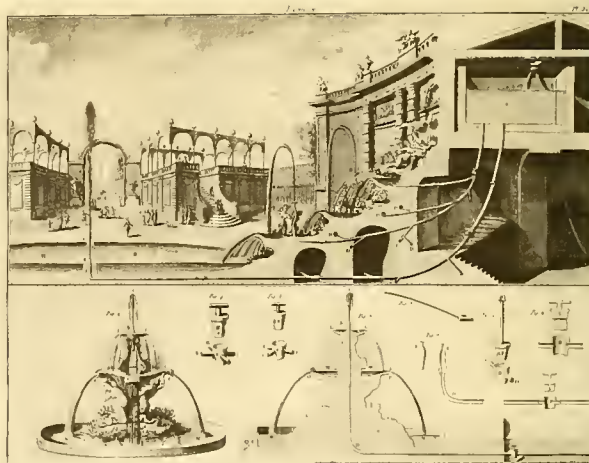
tion they provide about technical processes in use during the eighteenth century, including those involved in woodworking, ceramics, glassmaking, metalwork, and upholstery (figure 8). Men and women are most frequently depicted in the small workshops that predominated prior to the Industrial Revolution. Techniques that had formerly been considered trade secrets are presented as rational, uniform processes, and most of the workers are shown in an environment suffused with dignity and calm.

The first volume of Diderot's *Encyclopédie* had two thousand subscribers. Interest in publications containing technical information did not slacken with the completion of Diderot's last volume. In fact, before Diderot began work on his *Encyclopédie* the French Royal Academy of Science had begun to plan its own multi-volume survey of French eighteenth-century crafts, entitled *Description des Arts et Métiers* (1761-1788). Each volume was written by a specialist in that subject. *L'Art du Fabriquand d'Etoffes de Soie* (Paris, 1773-1789) by Jean Paulet offered information about eighteenth-century silk-weaving techniques in text and illustrations that surpassed those of Diderot in accuracy and detail. *L'Art du Menuisier* (Paris, 1769-1775) by André Roubo included numerous engravings showing the tools and techniques of woodworking, cabinetmaking, carriage making and furniture construction. *L'Art du Plombier et Fontainier* (Paris, 1773) by Claude Mathieu de LaGardette, featured engraved illustrations that showed how a copper roof was laid and how fountains were constructed (figure 9).

Only two complete sets of the *Description* are known to exist in the United States. Totalling 113 volumes and covering more than seventy crafts and trades, it is considered the best source of information about the techniques in use during the eighteenth century. The Cooper-Hewitt Museum Library is fortunate to own fourteen volumes on indigo, cast iron,



8 Denis Diderot, editor. *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers*. Paris: Briasson, 1751-77.



9 Claude Mathieu de LaGardette. *L'Art du Plombier et Fontainier*. Paris: L.F. Delatour, 1773.

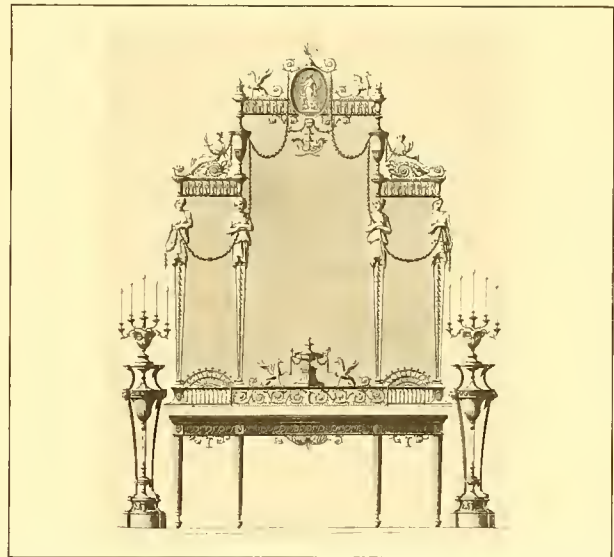
glue, plumbing, glass, silk, woodworking, and embroidery.

Technical encyclopedias on the scale of Diderot's and the French Royal Academy of Science's were expensive to produce and were intended for the growing market of wealthy and well-educated gentlemen who could afford the cost of such multi-volume works. These men were expected to be familiar with history, philosophy, literature, science, technology, and the arts. They founded learned societies, and they actively promoted artists and writers.

The enlightened eighteenth-century gentleman was also expected to travel extensively on the Continent. The culmination of a Grand Tour was often an extended visit to Rome to study its ancient monuments and works of art. It was during his stay in Rome in the 1750s that the Scottish architect Robert Adam met Giovanni Battista Piranesi, already well known for the publication of his architectural views of Rome. The two shared a fascination with antiquity, and their friendship, and in particular Piranesi's influence on Robert Adam, is evident in the books that each published. Piranesi dedicated several of his volumes to Robert Adam, and subscribed to both of Adam's major publications – *The Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro* (1764) and the *Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam* (1773-1778) – in addition to engraving four of the plates for the *Works*. But more importantly the attitudes toward ornamentation that Piranesi expressed in his *Diverse Maniere d'Adornare i Cammini* (1769) influenced Adam's own style. Piranesi's double folio volume included engraved designs for chimneypieces, tables, chairs, vases, and clocks in a heavily ornamented and thoroughly unique adaptation of the Etruscan and Egyptian styles (figure 10). Adam was clearly in agreement with Piranesi's imaginative interpretations, but his own adaptations were strikingly more graceful and delicate (figure 11).



10 Giovanni Battista Piranesi. *Diverse Maniere d'Adornare i Cammini*. Rome: Salomoni, 1769.



11 Robert and James Adam. *Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam*. London: Priestley & Weale, 1773-1822.

In 1757 Adam set off for Spalatro (now Split in Yugoslavia) to visit the Roman palace of Diocletian. Upon his return to England his sketches of the palace were published in a lavish folio volume entitled *Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro* (1764), a form of self-advertisement allowing him to proclaim his familiarity with the proportions and ornamentation of classical architecture. He dedicated the book to George III, whose reign promised an “Age of Perfection” similar to that of “Pericles, Augustus, or the Medicis.” Such glowing dedications were an essential element in the complex business transactions involved in publishing expensive illustrated books. An author usually dedicated his work in order to win or to repay favors, and in Adam’s case his dedication was a politically-wise attempt to attract Whig clients.

In order to raise money to publish an expensive illustrated book the promoter often issued a prospectus about the proposed work in the hope of attracting subscribers whose money would pay for the book’s completion. The subscribers’ names appeared in a list at the front of the book, a form of promotion by association for the author, the publisher, and the subscribers. A large publication was also likely to be issued in parts to insure that the publisher did not run out of money before the work was completed. If the first volume was well received, the subsequent volumes, or parts, attracted new subscribers who wanted to be associated with a successful venture and with the elite group who had initially subscribed.

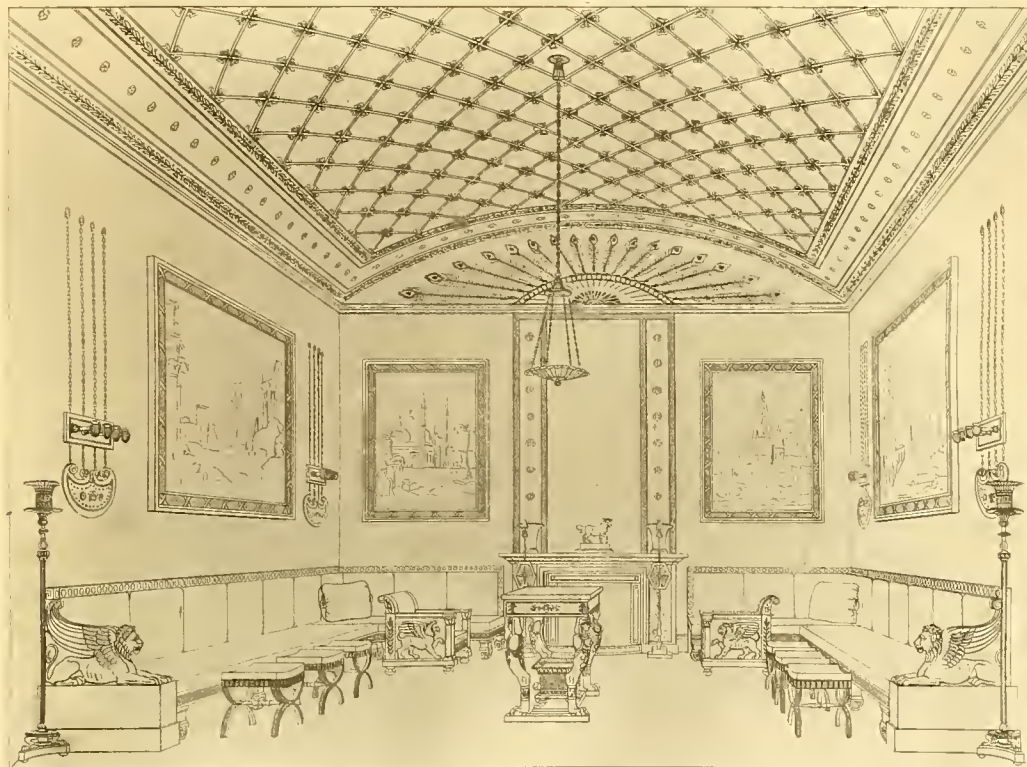
Adam was not alone in promoting himself by publishing a book about his travels to ancient architectural sites. The architect Robert Wood produced *Ruins of Palmyra* in 1753 and *Ruins of Balbec* in 1757; James Stuart and Nicholas Revett brought out *Antiquities of Athens* between 1762 and 1830; Charles Heathcote Tatham published *Ancient Ornamental Architecture* in 1799; and Henry William Inwood followed with *Erechtheion of Athens* in 1827. Such works

were instrumental in bringing about a change of attitude towards antique ornamentation and architecture, as patrons, architects, and designers who owned these volumes learned to prefer decoration that was more in keeping with antique proportions and that was based on actual architectural elements and motifs.

Thomas Hope is an ideal example of the enlightened eighteenth-century patron of the arts. Between 1787 and 1795 he undertook an extensive Grand Tour to Europe and the Middle East, collecting antique and contemporary works of art along the way. Upon his return he bought a house designed by Robert Adam and proceeded to make it into a show-piece of the neoclassical style. Hope opened the house to visitors with proper credentials or letters of introduction and illustrated it in a volume entitled *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration*, published in 1807 (figure 12). In the book, Hope presents his own designs for furniture and interiors, with a list of the artists, designers, and publications that were his sources of inspiration. These included Stuart and Revett’s four-volume work, in addition to volumes by Piranesi, Robert Adam, and Robert Wood.

Thomas Hope supported the publication of other significant books of design, in addition to his own, as a member of the Society of Dilettanti. Founded in 1732 as a club for wealthy gentlemen who had traveled to Italy, the Society played an immensely influential role in promoting interest in classical art. In 1762 the Society published the first volume in Stuart and Revett’s *Antiquities*, followed over the years by the works of other architects and designers.

Hope included among his acquaintances an international group of decorators, architects, and artists, many of whom he met in Rome. He was probably aware of the work of Giocondo Albertolli, whose volumes of engraved neoclassical designs were highly regarded and whose *Miscellanea* contains his notable depictions of eagles, a neoclassical motif favored by many decorators. Hope’s obsession with antiquity, in



12 Thomas Hope, *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration*
Executed from Designs by Thomas Hope.
 London: Longman, Hurst, Ross & Orme, 1807.

addition to his preference for the outline style of engraving for book illustration, was shared by John Flaxman and Charles Percier. The French architect and designer Charles Percier was responsible for introducing the new style of archaeological classicism to France through *Recueil des Décorations Intérieures*, published with his associate, Pierre Fontaine, in 1801 and 1812. Percier and Fontaine became the leading designers of the Empire style, which rapidly spread

throughout Europe in the wake of Napoleon's armies. How modern the two sound when they proclaim: "Amongst all the forms of a chair there are some which are dictated by the shape of our body, the needs of convenience...what is there that Art could add? It should purify the forms dictated by convenience and combine them with the simplest of outlines, giving rise from these natural conditions to ornamental motifs which would be adapted to the essential form

without ever disguising its nature....” While few furniture-makers chose to copy exactly the uncompromisingly antique style of Thomas Hope and Percier and Fontaine, their work was the basis for a more comfortable style popularized by such pattern books as *A Collection of Designs for Household Furniture*, published by George Smith in 1808.

The training required to become a craftsman was long and rigorous, and illustrated books played an important part. Apprentices and journeymen had to demonstrate familiarity with their tools and the technical aspects of their work, but they also had to show an ability to adapt and use ornamental designs. It was common practice from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century for designers and architects to adapt engraved ornamental designs found in pattern books. One of the earliest important furniture pattern books in the Cooper-Hewitt Museum Library is by the sixteenth-century French architect and wood-carver Hugues Sambin. His *Oeuvre de la Diversité des Termes*, published in 1572, illustrates male and female busts (figure 13) that were adapted as carved decoration for furniture in France in the sixteenth-century.

The prolific designer and engraver Jean Le Pautre produced over a thousand plates of ornament in the seventeenth century, including designs for moldings, ceilings, chimneypieces, friezes, vases, keys, silver, and furniture in a style that has been described as dense, bold, and vigorous (figure 14). His published work was the major vehicle for spreading French baroque ornamental design throughout Europe, where it was studied and adapted by craftsmen and design students up through the nineteenth century.

The impact of Raphael's ornamental grotesques affected all areas of the decorative arts. In 1770 the newspaper *Mercure de France* described his arabesque designs for the Loggia at the Vatican as “very useful for painters, sculptors, architects, goldsmiths, metal-chasers, lock-smiths, embroiderers, and all

those who, in their work, need decoration for objects.” Two years later his designs were engraved and published in a book.

The influence of Raphael's work is evident in the work of Michaelangelo Pergolesi, an eighteenth-century Italian designer who assisted Robert Adam in England. Pergolesi's ornamental designs for walls, furniture, and metalwork were engraved and published between 1777 and 1801 and played a major part in disseminating Adamesque ornament. His book was studied by numerous architects and designers who otherwise might never have been familiar with his designs since his only known completed work is the interior wall decoration that he executed for Robert Adam at Syon House.



13 Hugues Sambin. *Oeuvre de la Diversité des Termes*. Lyon: Jean Durant, 1572.



14 Jean Le Pautre. Plate from a volume of ornamental engraving. 1630-1682.

For craftsmen and builders who could not afford such books there were less expensive pattern books and technical manuals. For example, *The Chimney-Piece-Maker's Daily Assistant* by Thomas Milton (London, 1766) is a pocket-sized picture book without text (figures 15 and 16). Each page has a single engraving of a fireplace. It was a handy guide, "a treasury of new designs in the antique, modern, ornamental, and Gothic taste," which meant that it was a visual catalogue of styles to suit the taste of any patron. Pattern books such as these allowed craftsmen to become self-taught decorators without having to design their own work. This is obviously the intention of *The Joiner and Cabinet Maker's Darling* by John Crunden (London, 1786), which featured designs for ornamental fretwork. Should there be any hesitancy on the part of the cabinetmaker, Crunden added suggested guidelines for the use of each design, engraved on the same plate with the design: "Frets proper for tea stands, trays, and fenders."

In the nineteenth century, the major Georgian pattern books by Chippendale, Hepplewhite and Sheraton were reprinted, and the books by Thomas Hope and Percier and Fontaine also continued to be influential. But new pattern books proliferated as designers competed for the public's attention in a "Battle of Styles." No one style supplanted another for long. When George Smith published *A Collection of Designs for Household Furniture and Interior Decoration* in 1808, classicism was in the forefront. By 1826, when he published *The Cabinetmaker's and Upholsterer's Guide*, the Gothic and Louis Quatorze styles supplemented the earlier book's emphasis on Grecian, Egyptian, Etruscan, and Roman designs. The Grecian style was preferred by Peter and Michael Angelo Nicholson in their important pattern book of 1826, *The Practical Cabinet-Maker, Upholsterer and Complete Decorator*, despite the fact that Richard Brown had emphasized upholstered furniture that was appealingly more comfortable in his earlier *Rudiments of*

Drawing Cabinet and Upholstery Furniture, published in 1820 and expanded in 1822. Rudolph Ackermann's magazine, *The Repository of the Arts*, the great barometer of styles between 1808 and 1829, managed to play no favorites, illustrating examples of all the styles. New pattern books continued to appear in rapid succession. In 1835 Augustus W. N. Pugin's *Gothic Furniture in the Style of the Fifteenth Century* was an attempt to reform the Gothic style, while three years later Richard Bridgen emphasized the Elizabethan style in his *Furniture with Candelabra*. Altogether the plethora of styles shown in pattern books resulted in great stylistic variety and even confusion. Gothic ornament could be applied to a neoclassical chair shape without hesitation, and the concern for comfort meant that upholstered furniture ballooned in size. Such enthusiasm reached a peak at the Great Exhibition of 1851, when manufacturers heaped ornament on already elaborate furniture forms in honor of the special occasion. The public's interest in such works continued unabated if we are to judge from J.B. Waring's *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition* (1863), which illustrated the massive decorative objects and furniture presented the year before.



15 Thomas Milton. *The Chimney-Piece-Maker's Daily Assistant*. London: H. Webley, 1766.



16 Thomas Milton. *The Chimney-Piece-Maker's Daily Assistant*.
London: H. Webley, 1766.

Illustrated natural history books have provided some of the more popular images for decorators and craftsmen to adapt or copy. Interest in exotic plants and animals rose in the eighteenth century as an increasing number of travelers brought back specimens and produced books illustrating and describing what they had recorded in their field notebooks. An extraordinary example was published by the Dutch entomologist Maria Sibylla Merian. The Library is fortunate to own her book, *Surinamische Insecten*, one of the finest illustrated natural history books published. In 1698 Merian left Amsterdam to spend two years in the Dutch colony of Surinam, where her daughter was a missionary. She kept an album in which she made watercolor drawings recording the insects of the country. Upon her return to Amsterdam she arranged to have her drawings engraved, hand-colored, and published in a lavish folio volume that appeared in 1705. It is considered to be the most magnificent book on insects produced up to that time because the illustrations are both accurate and visually pleasing.

The urge to catalogue and describe exotic plants and animals lead Mark Catesby to America in 1712. For seven years he traveled through Virginia collecting botanical specimens, and upon his return to London he found that his hard work had paid off. A group of amateur scientists provided the money he needed to return to America for a more extended trip lasting from 1722 to 1726. Catesby's enthusiasm for the subject lead him to overcome his limited artistic ability and learn the process of engraving in order to publish the sketches he made during his travels. He hand colored most of the plates in the book himself. The resulting magnificent two-volume work, *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands* (1729-1743), is the first major illustrated book about American birds, plants, and animals (figure 17).

During the eighteenth century, collectors built extraordinary natural history collections. The British

royal family established the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, outside London, described by its designer, the architect William Chambers, in an illustrated volume entitled *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Perspective Views of the Gardens and Buildings at Kew in Surrey* (1763). The influx of so many exotic plants and animals and the surge of illustrated natural history publications such as those by Merian and Catesby inspired the creativity of craftsmen and decorators. Porcelain painters working for manufactories such as Meissen, Chelsea, Bow, Bristol, and Swansea copied or adapted book illustrations to design figurines and other ceramic pieces.

Robert Thornton's breathtakingly beautiful *Temple of Flora* (1799-1807) appeared just as the natural history craze was waning. Thornton undertook to publish a book entitled *A New Illustration of the Sexual System of Carolus von Linnaeus*, of which *Temple of Flora* was the third part, in an attempt to popularize Linnaeus's system of botanical classification. He dedicated the book to Queen Charlotte and spared no money in hiring painters and engravers. Exotic flowering plants were depicted in romantic settings with moonlit temples, church towers, and mountains in the background. Without a doubt Thornton produced the greatest English colorplate flower book that exists to this day, but he was financially ruined by its publication. Before Thornton could complete the work, the public's interest in botany declined. War with France meant that bringing plant specimens back to England from abroad was a risky undertaking, and George III's declining health caused the royal family's interest in botany to decline. Despite an effort to recoup his losses through a lottery of the paintings prepared for *Temple of Flora*, Thornton lived out the rest of his life in poverty.

Europeans were fascinated by the Orient, and designers and craftsmen found travel books about the East to be particularly useful sources. When Johann



17 Mark Catesby. *The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*. London: B. White, 1771.

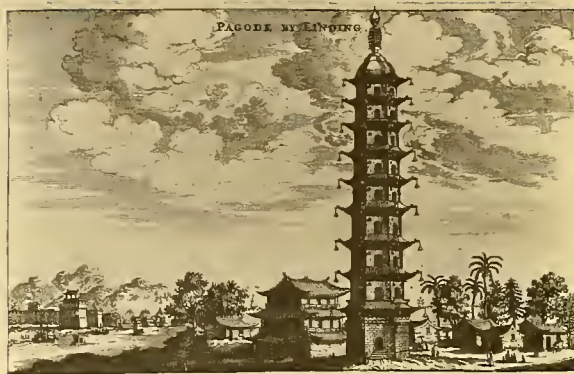
Nieuhof, an agent of the Dutch East India Company, returned from a trade mission to China in 1655, an illustrated book of his impressions was published in Amsterdam (figure 18). Lacquered furniture, ornamental gardens, and buildings covered with colored glazed tiles and hung with bells were described and illustrated. Compared with other travelers' reports, Nieuhof's was considered to be extremely accurate. It

was quickly translated into French and German, and its illustrations served for several years as the best source on Chinese architecture and design. In 1721 when Fischer von Ehrlach wrote and illustrated his encyclopedia of world architecture, *Entwurf einer Historischen Architektur*, his section on China was based chiefly on Nieuhof's book.

Travelers to China brought back oriental lacquered furniture to Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; however, it was extremely expensive and rare. The publication of John Stalker and George Parker's *Treatise on Japanning and Varnishing* in 1688 was an attempt to circumvent the difficulty in obtaining actual pieces (figure 20). The book, which was one of the earliest pattern books for chinoiserie, provided designs and varnish recipes for decorating furniture to resemble lacquered pieces. For some of the illustrations Stalker and Parker copied details from the plates in Nieuhof's earlier book. *The Ladies' Amusement; or, Whole Art of Japanning Made Easy* (London 1762) included over one hundred colored plates of fanciful ornamental motifs based on decorative designs by Jean Pillement and others, along with a text describing the method for japanning tea trays, small cabinets, and ornamental boxes (figure 19). Pillement's exotic vignettes, combining images of pagodas, bells, dragonflies, and birds, were also copied to great effect in fabric and wallpaper patterns.

Rococo decorators made frequent use of the monkey as a playful decorative device in chinoiserie ornamentation. One significant example that was copied was Christopher Huet's suite of drawings depicting monkeys in costumes, published in the 1740s as *Singeries ou Différentes Actions de la Vie Humaine Représentées par des Singes*. Huet's designs were copied for ceramic decoration as well as for details in marquetry tabletops and on wall panels.

While the designs in *The Ladies' Amusement* were based on imaginary scenes of China, those in books by other designers and architects were more accurate attempts at copying Chinese architecture and furniture. In 1757 William Chambers published *Designs of Chinese Buildings, Furniture, Dresses, Machines, and Utensils*, based on his sketches made in China during the 1740s on behalf of the Swedish East India



18 Johann Nieuhof. *Het Gezantschap der Neerlandtsche Oost-Indische Compagnie*. Amsterdam: Jacob van Neurs, 1665.



19 Jean Pillement. *The Ladies' Amusement; or, Whole Art of Japanning Made Easy*. London: printed for Robert Sayer, 1762.



20 John Stalker and George Parker. *A Treatise on Japanning and Varnishing, Being a Compleat Discovery of Those Arts*. Oxford: printed for, and sold by the authors, 1688.



21 *Toiletten-Geschenk: ein Jahrbuch für Damen.*
Leipzig: Georg Vosz, 1807.

Company. One suspects that Chambers's memory might not have been precise and that he probably altered the buildings somewhat to suit Western taste; however, the book was one of the first European attempts to accurately illustrate examples of Chinese design. Chambers is probably best known for the pagoda at Kew Gardens, which he designed as part of an extensive remodeling of the gardens for the royal family beginning in 1757. When the gardens were completed in 1763 he published a handsomely illustrated folio volume to publicize his accomplishment. Sadly, the pagoda has long since lost the original eighty colored roof dragons that are clearly evident in the engraved illustration for the volume.

A significant number of illustrated books and magazines were published specifically for amateurs interested in handwork, of which the largest number were women. Upper-class women in particular had the leisure time for handwork and could afford the expensive materials involved. Typically, women's handwork, or fancywork as it was sometimes called, included objects made with beads, shells, feathers, and various kinds of needlework. *Journal für Fabriken, Manufakturen, Handlung, Kunst und Mode* (Leipzig,

1791-1808) featured information about textiles, with actual fabric swatches glued into each issue, plus fashion illustrations and the latest styles in interior decoration (figure 23). The magazine *Penelope* (Amsterdam, 1821-1835) included numerous colored patterns for making reticules, in addition to other patterns and floral arrangements to copy in needlework. Similarly *Toiletten-Geschenk* (Leipzig, 1805-1808) included needlework patterns, plus illustrations of proper dress and etiquette (figure 21).

In the nineteenth century the tasteful decoration of the middle-class home was chiefly the responsibility of women. Hundreds of do-it-yourself books were published with such irresistible titles as *Household Elegancies* and *Rustic Adornments for Homes of Taste*. They covered all aspects of housekeeping and interior design, with emphasis placed on economic and sensible approaches to the challenges of domestic decoration. The art critic Clarence Cook (1828-1900) even went so far as to recommend specific New York furniture stores in his book, *The House Beautiful* (New York, 1878).

Many women had to work for a living, and often the only respectable work available was sewing or needlework. *Simple Directions in Needle-Work and Cutting Out* (Dublin, 1835) was written in the form of a lesson plan book for teachers in the National Female Schools of Ireland. Instruction progressed from hemming, sewing, and seaming to making button holes, gathers, and tucks, until the student was able to complete a shirt or knit a sock. At the back of the book appropriate examples of the work for each lesson were glued onto separate pages (figure 22). *The Work Woman's Guide* (London, 1838), written by "a lady," contains "instructions to the inexperienced in cutting out and completing those articles of wearing apparel which are usually made at home." Written instructions are accompanied by simple outline illustrations at the back of the book.



22 *Simple Directions in Needle-Work and Cutting Out; Intended for the Use of the National Female Schools of Ireland.*
Dublin: printed by William Holden, Hibernia Press Office, 1835.

238 VII. Anzeige und Beschreibung neuer

No. 2 einen ländlichen Sitz oder Ruheplatz am äußersten Ende einer schönen Aussicht, dar. Beides hat der unverdächtige Laune und dem besondern Geschmack des Länders sein Dasein zu verdanken.

Tabl. IV. ist den neuesten Moden von England gemet. Die Dame unter

No. 1 erscheint in der Abendkleidung; das Haar trägt sie in große und die Seitenhaare in kleine Locken frisiert. Das Chiffonnet ist von hellblauen Atlas. Die äußern Enden zieren blaueidene mit Silber durchsetzte Franzen. Fern ist eine schwarze krause Feder auf der rechten Seite eine weiße und gelbe Straußfeder angebracht.

Die Ohren zieren diamantene Gehänge.

Der Halschmuck besteht aus zwei Schnuren achter Perlen.

Den Busen deckt ein langes verne mit einer diamantenen Schleife zusammen gezogenes Halstuch.

Das weiße Unterkleid ist von feinem Mousselin und russische Robbe ist von weißem mit Blau und Silber bewirkten Mousselin. Sie trägt lange blaue Atlasärmel, die Oberarmel mit einer großen Perl aufwärts gezogen. Die ganze ist mit blaueidenen und silbernen Franzen besetzt.

Den Beschluß von diesem neuesten Modenputz macht weiße mit Silber gestülpte Schuhe.

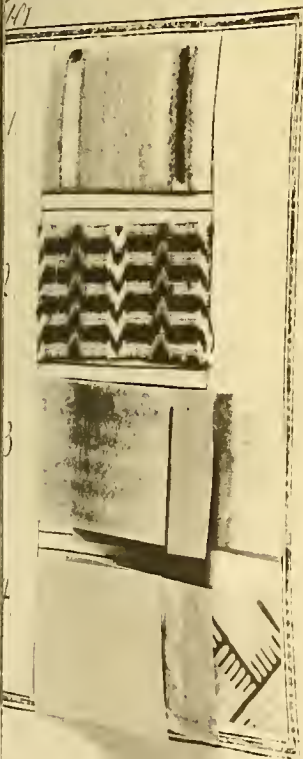
Die Dame unter

No. 2. trägt das Haar gekräuselt und in Locken fallend statt des Kopfpuges einen weißen Patenthut von

NATURLICHE MUSTER

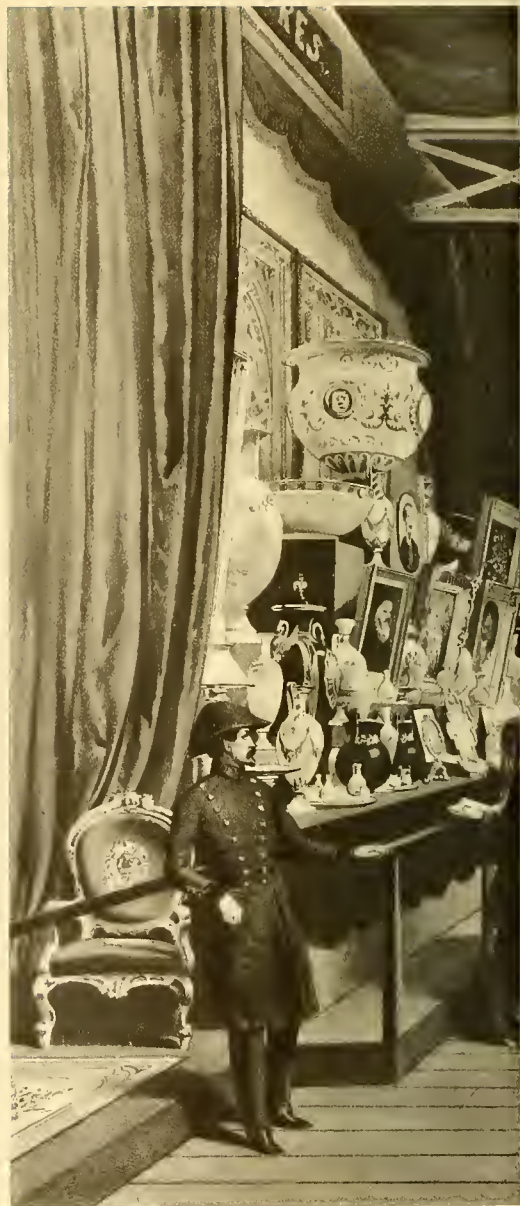
neuer

Zeug-Fabrik Artikel



International exhibitions and world fairs were occasions for designers and manufacturers to exhibit their best products, and the Cooper-Hewitt Museum Library has a large collection of material relating to such events. These range from souvenir guides and official catalogues to illustrated folio volumes. The largest in the collection is *Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851*, with chromolithographed views of the interior of Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace (figure 24), including scenes of the exhibition's official opening by Queen Victoria.

The Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 was a financial success, but it was a great disappointment to a group of English designers who were involved in its organization. In the opinion of Henry Cole, Owen Jones, and Matthew Digby Wyatt, most of the objects exhibited were woeful examples of the declining state of design as applied to machine-made objects (what Cole described as "art manufactures"). The incorporation of good design into the manufacturing process had somehow been neglected. Profit and speed motivated the manufacturer at the expense of good taste. In an effort to publicize the commercial value of good design by showing examples of both well designed and badly designed objects, Henry Cole initiated *The Journal of Design and Manufactures* (1849-1852). It was an extraordinary undertaking. Cole included fabric swatches and wallpaper samples in each issue in order to hammer home his argument that flat and simple patterns should be used for decorating flat surfaces. The magazine was also noteworthy for illustrating objects that were considered poorly designed and for aiming succinct, fearless criticism at the manufacturer. Certain items were described as "detestable," "vulgar," or "absurd," and the authors repeatedly expressed such laments as, "It is really





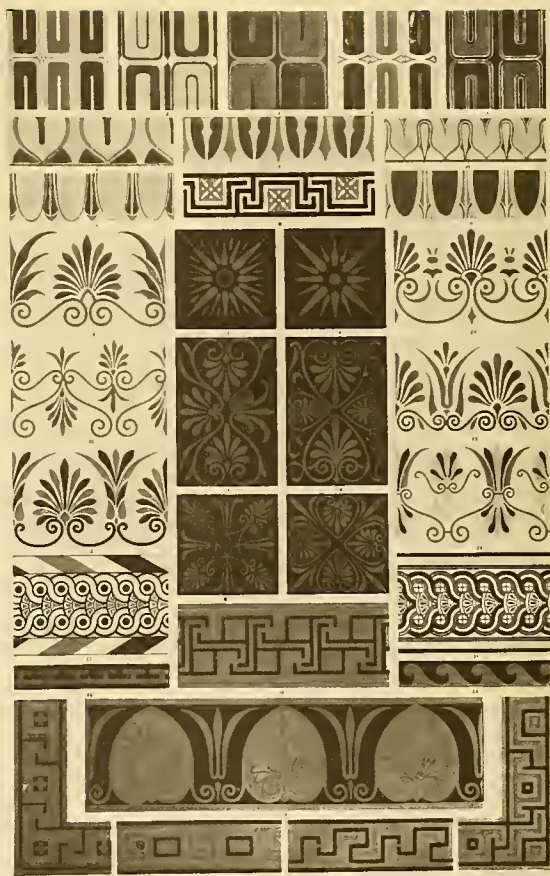
24 *Dickinson's Comprehensive Pictures of the Great Exhibition of 1851.* London: Dickinson Bros., 1854.

a pity to see manufacturers devoting time and energy to the production of rubbish of this kind....” In turn, throughout the magazine, objects were praised whose design was considered suitable for their purpose.

A further attempt to educate designers was made by Owen Jones in his *Grammar of Ornament* (London, 1856), the first systematic historical presentation of decoration. Aptly titled, the volume contained one hundred chromolithographed folio plates illustrating patterns and motifs from many countries and time periods (figure 25), with over one hundred pages of text about the assemblage. It has been described as “one of the greatest monuments of color printing in the nineteenth century,” and was notable for expanding the vocabulary of design to include non-Western decoration. Owen Jones was primarily responsible for the work, with the assistance of Matthew Digby Wyatt and Christopher Dresser, among others. All three produced other lavishly illustrated volumes about ornamentation, but none compares in scope, size, and beauty with *The Grammar of Ornament*.

In addition to exhibitions and fairs, a major vehicle for nineteenth-century manufacturers to advertise their products in print was the trade catalogue or product catalogue, which could vary in format from an unillustrated price list to folio volumes with colored illustrations. It could be suggested that Thomas Chippendale’s *Gentleman and Cabinet-Maker’s Director* of 1754 was a prototype of the manufacturer’s trade catalogue, since it was printed to advertise the products of Chippendale’s workshop.

The Cooper-Hewitt Museum Library is fortunate to own several of the notable trade catalogues produced by J.L. Mott Iron Works between 1870 and 1907 (figure 26). The firm issued some of the finest illustrated trade catalogues of ornamental ironwork, fountains, garden furniture and statuary, weather vanes, and plumbing supplies for bathrooms and kitchens.



25 Owen Jones. *The Grammar of Ornament*.
London: Day and Son, 1856.

DECORATED WASH BASINS.



DESIGN NO. 480.
PEAR BLOSSOM.



DESIGN NO. 485.
JAPANESE QUINCE.



DESIGN NO. 479.
WILD ASTER.



DESIGN NO. 593.
ORCHID.



DESIGN NO. 544.
PRIMROSE.



DESIGN NO. 773.
CRAB APPLE.

SIZES:

Oval, 10 x 15 inches outside the flange, no overflow. Oval, 17 x 14 inches outside the flange, no overflow.
 " 19 x 15 " " " " common overflow. " 17 x 14 " " " " common overflow.
 Round, 14 inches, common overflow.

When ordering, size of Basin should be mentioned, also whether No Overflow or Common Overflow.

Trade catalogues have proliferated in the twentieth century. Most are pamphlets, a format that is less expensive to produce than books, allowing the manufacturer to update the information frequently. As manufacturers became aware that the way objects were presented in illustrations had an impact on sales, increasingly more sophisticated methods were used in designing trade catalogues. By 1914, when W. & J. Sloane offered their new line of cane chairs, it was considered advantageous to photograph them in a homelike setting (figure 27).

In the twentieth century, industrial designers have left their mark on an increasing number of everyday objects. Henry Dreyfuss was one of the pioneer American industrial designers who established ergonomics as an essential method for designers. "When the point of contact between the product and the people becomes a point of friction then the industrial designer has failed," he declared in his 1955 book, *Designing for People*. On the flyleaf of the book he illustrated the average male and female figures that he used as the basis for all his work (figure 28). The Dreyfuss Archives were presented to the museum in 1973, at the same time that the Doris and Henry Dreyfuss Memorial Study Center was established to house the Cooper-Hewitt Library. Dreyfuss's papers reveal the wide variety of machines and utilitarian objects he designed, including airplanes, vacuum cleaners, telephones, and tractors.

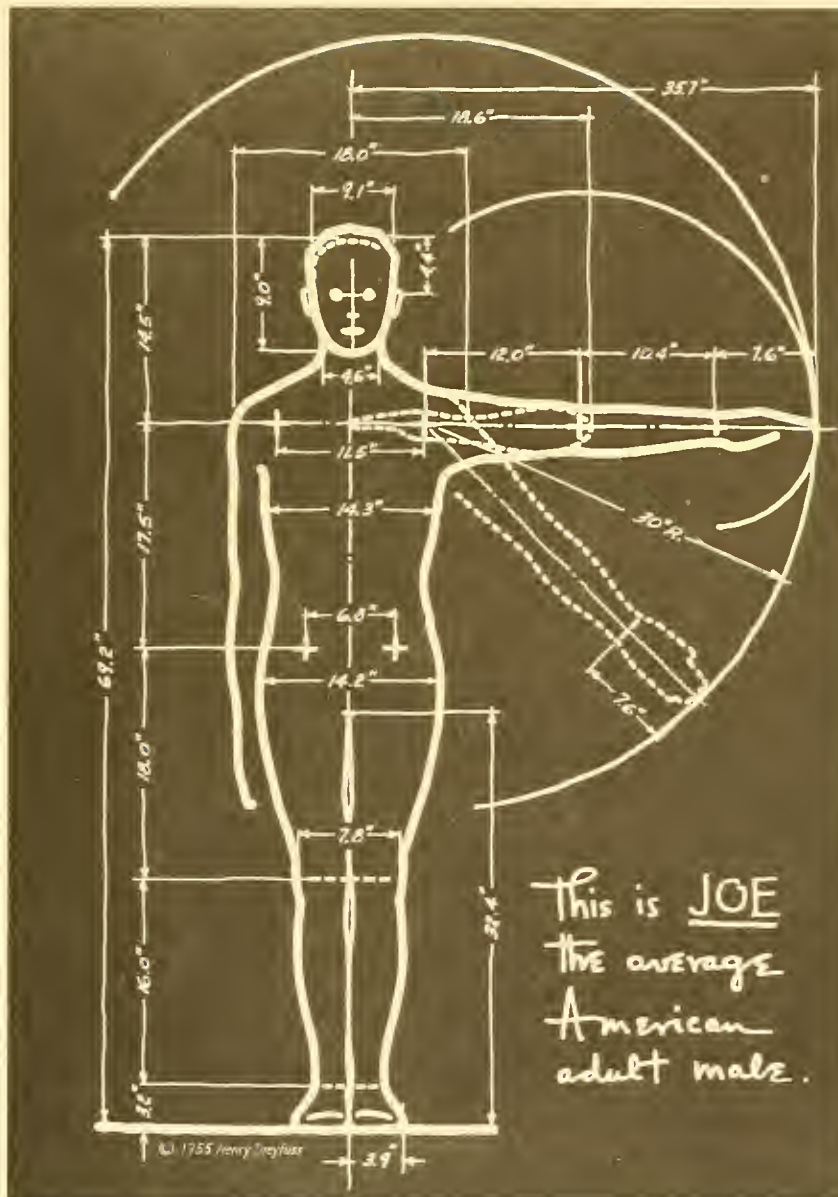
Like some of the everyday objects they design, books by twentieth-century designers tend to be mass produced, defying the term "rare," which can be applied to most of the books discussed so far. That does not detract from the book's good design, however. The cover and interior layout of Paul Frankl's *Form and Reform* bring to mind the elegant style of his furniture designs, which were described by one reviewer as "celebrated sky-scraper type of furniture...as American and New Yorkish as Fifth Avenue itself."

There are more illustrated books of design available today than ever before, and, while images are available to designers from an enormous variety of sources that dazzle the senses – films, television, and video – an illustrated book or magazine continues to offer a personal visual experience that can be enjoyed without electric gadgets. A book can be held, it can be examined practically anywhere, and at a pace that is controlled by the reader. As the pages of a book are turned, the words and images demand the reader's involvement. Ultimately, as long as the book is a convenient and pleasurable package for words and pictures, it will continue to suit the needs of the designer.

Katharine Martinez
Chief Librarian

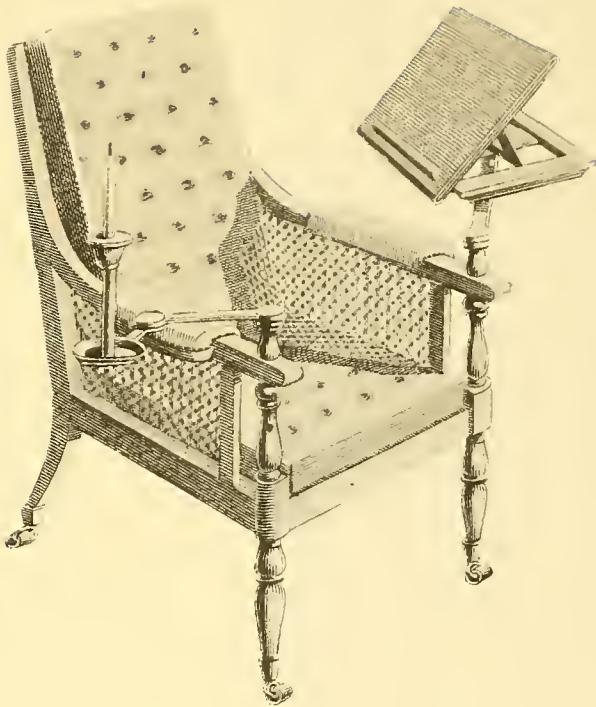


27 W. & J. Sloane Company. *The Dryad Cane Book*.
New York: ca. 1914.



28 Henry Dreyfuss. *Designing for People*.
New York: Simon and Schuster, 1955.

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